

### **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

The listing of claims below replaces all prior versions of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended): A iron oxide whisker erecting structure, comprising:  
a substrate of iron based alloy having a surface; and  
iron oxide whiskers of aspect ratio higher than 20 erected on said surface,  
wherein the iron oxide whiskers are crystallographically combined with adjacent crystal  
grains of the substrate of iron based alloy.

2-5 (Cancelled).

6. (Currently Amended): An iron oxide whisker erecting structure as claimed in ~~claim 5~~  
claim 1, wherein said iron oxide whisker is made by bringing said iron based alloy into contact  
with oxidative atmosphere so as to react surface iron atoms with oxygen atoms brought into  
contact therewith at high temperature, thereby attaining growth as oxide whiskers.

7-8. (Cancelled).

9. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended): A method of ~~erecting oxide whiskers of a high~~  
~~aspect ratio on a surface or surfaces of an iron or titanium based alloy~~ making an iron oxide  
whisker erecting structure, which comprises:

bringing an said iron ~~or titanium~~ based alloy into contact with oxidative atmosphere so as to react the surface iron atoms ~~or the surface titanium atoms~~ with oxygen atoms brought into contact therewith at high temperature, ~~thereby attaining growth as oxide whiskers~~

wherein whisker erecting structure, comprises:

a substrate of iron based alloy having a surface; and

iron oxide whiskers of aspect ratio higher than 20 erected on said surface,

wherein the iron oxide whiskers are crystallographically combined with adjacent crystal particles of the substrate of iron based alloy.

10. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended): A method of ~~erecting oxide whiskers of a high aspect ratio on a surface or surfaces of an iron or titanium based alloy~~ making an iron oxide whisker erecting structure, which comprises bringing an said iron or titanium based alloy into contact with oxidative atmosphere so as to react the surface iron atoms ~~or the surface titanium atoms~~ with oxygen atoms brought into contact therewith at high temperature, ~~thereby attaining growth as oxide whiskers~~ as claimed in claim 9,

wherein ~~the growth of said oxide whiskers is hastened by~~ a temperature gradient is provided in an said iron ~~or titanium~~ based alloy.

11. (Previously Presented): A whisker erecting structure as claimed in claim 1, wherein said iron oxide whiskers contain non-iron metal atoms less than 10 atomic percent.